



# Drop, Cover, and Hold On Earthquake Drill Manual for Businesses



## Level 3 – Intermediate: Decision-Making Drill

This drill includes all aspects of Level 2 and adds a “table top” exercise for decision-makers to consider how the earthquake would impact your organization.

### **BEFORE the Drill**

1. If you will participate in the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut, please register your Business as an official participant at [www.shakeout.org/centralus](http://www.shakeout.org/centralus).

- Let your employees know whether registration will be at the corporate or departmental level or if separate office locations should register individually.

2. Bring together a team of individuals to design the drill.

- Determine or review your emergency procedures for an earthquake.

3. Determine the length of your drill and its objectives.

- If you have a disaster plan, the objectives and resulting drill can test a specific part of your plan.
- What would you like your drill to test?

4. Learn about potential earthquakes for your area and use your team to develop your own “business disaster scenario” with specific details of how you might expect the shaking to impact your business (i.e., the building, operations, production chain, employees, and customers). For ideas, review the ShakeOut Scenario at [www.shakeout.org/centralus/scenario](http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/scenario). Consider the following:

- Would the power be out? Phone communications down? Loading dock severely damaged?
- How will you direct employees during and immediately following the shaking?
- Consider that certain factors (your location, building type, damage impacts) will influence your decisions regarding what to do immediately after the earthquake (i.e., evacuating vs. staying put) and in the longer term (how customers will get to you).
- Identify who is authorized to make and communicate post-earthquake decisions.
- If your business has “floor wardens” for fire evacuation, how will you use them during earthquakes, especially if you do not evacuate?
- Make sure the impacts you determine for your “business disaster scenario” make it possible to support your drill objectives.
- Note: If you “wipe-out” the whole community, you eliminate your reason to drill.

5. Invite your company’s executives and key decision-makers to participate in your drill. If you already have a plan, have them review it prior to the drill.

6. Let your employees know:

- The date and time of your drill.
- How to correctly perform *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*, wherever they are ([www.dropcoverholdon.org](http://www.dropcoverholdon.org)), includes taking cover beneath a sturdy table or desk, or dropping to the floor near an interior wall and covering your head with your hands and arms. Develop special procedures for unique locations such as warehouses or offices with glass walls.
- Your expectations for their participation (i.e., to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*, and then after the shaking stops, to gather at a central location to account for occupants, etc.)
- If away from the office - set a cell phone alarm for the time of the drill, and encourage those they are with to participate as well.
- If unable to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On* during the drill - pause at drill-time to consider what you would do if an earthquake were to strike at that moment.
- If your drill is part of the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut, encourage employees, customers, etc. to invite friends, families, and neighbors to register as individuals or organizations at [www.shakeout.org/centralus](http://www.shakeout.org/centralus), so they can participate and receive information directly on how to be safe during an earthquake.

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7. **(Optional)** Download realistic sound effects and safety information to play for participants during your drill from <http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/resources>. (*Download and test before the drill. Don't try to play them from the web site during the drill.*)
8. Determine whether to add post-shaking building evacuation to the drill: Based on the age and type of your building and the environment inside/outside of building, etc., determine whether you would evacuate after an earthquake, or whether you would first *assess the building's damage* before directing employees to either stay put or evacuate. Consider what new safety hazards outside of your facility might be caused by the shaking.
9. Develop a brief written description of the earthquake's impact, along with questions to consider during the drill. For ideas, review the ShakeOut Scenario at [www.shakeout.org/centralus/scenario](http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/scenario).

## **The Night BEFORE the Drill**

Tape the brief description of the earthquake's impact under desks and conference tables or provide employees sealed envelopes to open during the drill. (*You can use email, but it is more effective if they do not read this until during the drill.*)

## **DURING the Drill:**

1. Invite your company's decision-makers (executives and key managers) to assemble in a pre-determined room a few minutes before your drill and briefly review drill objectives. When the drill is announced, tell all participants in this group to also *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*.
2. Via your PA system, e-mail, cell phone/text reminder or verbally:
  - Announce that the earthquake drill has begun and to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*.
  - **(Optional)** Play the downloaded sound effects (<http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/resources>) on your PA system or on a computer in each office.
  - Suggest that while down on the floor, employees look around at what might fall on them during an earthquake. Secure or move these items after the drill to prevent injury and damage.
3. If not using optional downloaded sound effects, then after at least one minute, announce that the shaking is over.
4. If your drill includes additional steps or activities such as evacuation to another location, initiate this part of your drill but consider new hazards that might be caused by the earthquake from fallen or broken objects (both in the building and outside) or ground deformation. ***Automatic evacuation after an earthquake may not be a safe action.***
5. In the room with the decision-makers:
  - Brief your "business disaster scenario" with details of the earthquake impacts.  
To make the potential impact more vivid, you can show a downloadable video of expected shaking ([www.shakeout.org/centralus/resources](http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/resources)). (*Download and test before the drill. Don't try to play a video from the web site during the drill.*)
  - Go around the table to discuss what your business can expect to happen and decisions that will be made based on the scenario.
  - Try to have the discussion flow in chronological order of what would be the expected activities and priorities in the first minutes, hours, days, etc. following the details of the "business disaster scenario"
  - However, if all issues are resolved quickly, move the scenario timeline forward days/weeks/months later and begin the discussion again to address new issues (aftershocks, recovery, rebuilding, etc.)
6. Document the chronology of the drill events, decisions, issues, and proposed solutions. Which policy decisions need to be made in advance? What changes in procedures are required?



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## **AFTER the Drill**

1. For the general employee population - hold staff meetings as soon as possible after the drill to discuss what happened, people's experience during the drill, what they were thinking about, what caused concern, what worked well and what didn't. Take this opportunity to also:
  - Discuss the importance of preparedness at work and at home. (Employees' home/family preparedness will allow them to either stay at work, or return to work more rapidly, to support your company's recovery.)
  - Review post-disaster employee responsibilities.
  - Update emergency contact lists and phone tree and communications outage procedures.
  - Discuss your safety and resumption of operations priorities.
  - Discuss company staff emergency responsibilities.
  - Share lessons learned from the drill or real experiences.
  - Listen attentively to staff suggestions.
  - Should you store food, water, or other post-earthquake needs?